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AUTHOR Sims, Anne; Goddard, Ty
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ABSTRACT

The four Open College Networks in London assessed the climate in inner London for adult students who wished to return to education and training. The research focussed on: the extent to which recent legislative changes threatened adult participation in education and training; the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and consequent handing over of responsibility for education to 13 inner London boroughs; and growth of the government's Employment Training Programme and its impact on adult education and training. A survey of 406 adult tutors was conducted (116 responded), and each of the 13 new local educational authorities (LEAs) supplied information regarding policies on fees and discretionary awards. Survey results included the following: (1) various threats to financial support for adult education were identified; (2) respondents were concerned about the effects of ILEA's abolition on recruitment and future providion for adults; (3) new LEAs had established mechanisms to ensure continuity, but uncertainties generated by the change were damaging; (4) the provision under the 21-Hour Rule whereby unemployed people are allowed to study part time had become increasingly restrictive; (5) Employment Training was a poor substitute in terms of quality of training and lack of progression routes; and (6) it was difficult to establish criteria for distributing access funds. Recommendations are made for changes to maximize adults' access to education and training. (Survey results and the instrument are appended.) (YLB)

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THE STRUGGLE TO STUDY

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULTS STUDYING IN LONDON

By Anne Sims and Ty Goddard

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November 1990

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LONDON'S OPEN COLLEGE NETWORKS

The four Open College Networks of London operate by forming collaborative links between institutions of adult, further and higher education, adult advice and careers services, and their local communities. They promote opportunities for adult students, particularly those who have benefitted least from the educational system. They have together formed the London Open College Federation in order to provide an accreditation system for all adult learning wherever it takes place. In addition to this, the four Networks offer the following:

- They provide a range of services which include carrying out action research, curriculum development, staff training and information services which often involves raising funding from external agencies.
- They provide a vital formal linking mechnanism between institutions and across borough boundaries.
- They provide a network of practitioners in institutions and education organisations who are skilled in and committed to working collaboratively in the interests of adult students.
- They provide a resource of expertise in the delivery methods appropriate to the requirements of a client group of growing significance in the future.
- They provide a unique link to Higher Education through existing access links and CNAA kitemarking of Access courses.

The four London Open College Networks are:

ALFA
(Access to Learning for Adults)

The North and East London
Open College Network
The Marlborough Building
383 Holloway Road
London N7 ORN

(Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets boroughs)

CAWLOC

Central and West London
Open College Network
Room 6, First Floor
Communal Block
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5BS

(Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster boroughs)

GLEAN

Greenwich and Lewisham
Education for Adults Network
C/o South East London College
West Greenwich Branch (R1 & 2)
Blackheath Road
London SE10 8DA

(Greenwich and Lewisham boroughs)

OCSL

Open College of South London
Vauxhall College
Belmore Street
Wandsworth Road
London
SW8 2JY

(Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth boroughs)

CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	1
Introduction	2
Aims and Methodology	3
The Inner London Boroughs' Inheritance	5
The Case for Adult Learning in the 1990s: Demographic Changes and Skill Shortages	8
Study Under the 21-Hour Rule	11
Background	11
The 1989 Social Security Act	12
Support Strategies Adopted by Institutions	13
Restart	14
The Development of Employment Training	17
Background	17
College and Adult-Education Based ET	17
The Shortcomings of ET	19
The Future of ET	20
The New Inner London Local Education Authorities: Fees and Awards	22
Discretionary Awards	22
Concessionary Fees	23
Standard Fees	24
Cross-Borough Reciprocal Fee Arrangements	24
The New LEAs: Looking to the Future	25
DES Access Funds	26
Conclusions	28
1. Abolition of the ILEA	28
2. The New Inner London Local Education Authorities	28
3. Study Under the 21-Hour Rule	28
4. Employment Training	28
5. Access Funds	29

Page

Recommendations 30
1. Study Under the 21-Hour Rule 30
2. Restart 30
3. Employment Training 30
4. Training and Enterprise Councils 30
5. Reciprocal Arrangements on Fees 30
6. Discretionary Awards 31
7. Liaison with Benefit Authorities 31
8. Access Funds 31

Survey Results 32
Response Rate 32
Mode of Study 32
Aim of Course 32
Progression Routes 32
Student Finance 1989/90 33
Discretionary Awards 1990/91 33
Employment Training 33
Effects of DSS regulations on Students Studying under the 21-Hour Rule 33
Pressures from the Employment Service 34
Strategies Adopted to Support Students Studying under the 21-Hour Rule 34
Recruitment Patterns 1990/91 34
Factors Affecting Recruitment for 1990/91 35

Appendix - Questionnaire 36

SUMMARY

Educational provision for adults in London has a key role to play in the 1990s in enabling adults to acquire and update basic skills, gain much needed qualifications and confidence,and progress to further courses in education and training.

Financial support systems for adult students have become extremely precarious as well as increasingly complex.

Our research revealed that threats to financial support for adult students now come from many different directions.

Our survey showed that educational practitioners - Access and Return to Learning tutors - were concerned about the effects of ILEA's abolition on recruitment and, by implication, on future provision for adults.

Many inner London boroughs are facing severe financial pressures due to the introduction of the Community Charge at the same time as they assumed responsibility for education.

Our survey revealed that study under the 21-Hour Rule, whereby unemployed people are allowed to study part-time whilst in receipt of benefit, is the most common means of finance in inner London: 73% of adult courses contain students studying under the 21-Hour Rule. Part-time study under the 21-Hour Rule has, however, become increasingly restricted: 52% of respondents to our questionnaire claimed that students on benefits had experienced difficulties as a result of the Department of Social Security's 'actively seeking work' regulations.

In addition, stricter procedures for interviewing and monitoring long term unemployed people under the Restart scheme have made it more difficult for them to take advantage of study under the 21-Hour Rule. 35% of respondents to our survey said that students had been forced to abandon their studies due to pressures from the Employment Service. As a response to this, 68% of respondents reported that their institutions had adopted specific strategies to support students on benefits studying under the 21-Hour Rule.

INTRODUCTION

The four Open College Networks in London are ALFA (Access to Learning for Adults, the North & East London Open College), CAWLOC (Central & West London Open College), GLEAN (Greenwich & Lewisham Education for Adults) and OCSL (Open College of South London). They are collaborative bodies which bring together organisations involved in the provision of learning opportunities for adults in inner London.

ALFA, CAWLOC, GLEAN and OCSL identified the issues surrounding financial support for adult students as a key area of concern during 1989/90. This was because of three key developments:

- changes in DSS regulations under the 1989 Social Security Act which were likely to impact upon students registered as unemployed and studying under the 21-Hour rule

- the devolution of responsibility for education in inner London from the ILEA to 13 new LEAs and the implications this would have for educational provision for adults across inner London, especially in terms of fee structures and the allocation of discretionary awards

- the growth of Employment Training - a scheme first introduced in 1988 and targetted at the long-term unemployed - and its impact upon education/training provision for adults.

As a result of these developments and their potential effects on adults wishing to take advantage of learning opportunities in inner London, the four Open College Networks agreed to fund a Student Funding Information Project which was set up in January 1990.

The project began by producing a series of Student Funding Bulletins designed to up-date practitioners in the field of adult learning on developments in the areas outlined above. However, it became apparent, during research for the three-weekly bulletins, that these issues were a major source of concern to practitioners and that more extensive research on these complex areas was required - particularly as the abolition of the ILEA became imminent. In addition, we were receiving requests for information from existing and intending students concerned about such issues as whether doing part-time study would affect their benefits or if they would be likely to get a grant for 1990/1.

Consequently, a research project was launched in May 1990 to investigate more fully the effects of the key issues which were having an impact on student finance in the now post-ILEA context. The report which follows is the culmination of this research which was conducted over a four-month period from May to September 1990. It represents an attempt to assess the present climate, in inner London, for adult students who wish to return to education and training in the capital and the threats to their successfully doing so.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

We began the research project in the knowledge that adult learning in London has been much acclaimed and that the ILEA's achievements in this field have been seen as a model of good practice across the UK as a whole. We also recognised the lack of a coherent system of financial support for adults wishing to return to education/training. Moreover, existing means whereby adults could take advantage of learning opportunities - study whilst on benefit under the 21-Hour rule, concessionary fees, discretionary awards - were under threat as a direct result of recent legislative changes.

Our overall aim, therefore, was to produce an action research based report. Our main objectives were:

1. to investigate the extent to which recent legislative changes represented a threat to adult participation in education/training in London

2. to highlight the importance of adult learning to the country as a whole in the 1990s in the context of demographic changes and skill shortages

3. to attempt to provide a coherent overview of the many factors which appeared to be having an impact on the financial position of adults engaging in education/training.

Central to these endeavours was an assessment of the impact of the abolition of the ILEA and consequent handing over of responsibility for education to 13 inner London boroughs - the loss of a coherent provision for adults and unified fees/grants structure across the capital.

We decided to conduct the research by means of a postal survey of adult tutors in further and adult education institutions across the four Open College Networks. We felt that as practitioners in the field of adult learning, tutors would be best placed to provide us with key information regarding the means whereby adult students finance their courses of study as well as the threats which these presently face. In this way we hoped to build a picture based on statistical evidence to complement the purely anecdotal reports we had received to date. Accordingly, we sent a questionnaire to all tutors of Return to Learning and Access courses across the four networks in June 1990 - during the period when the 1989/90 academic year was coming to an end and recruitment was under way for courses due to commence in September 1990.

The rationale behind surveying such a broad area of provision was to try to get a picture which would cover the full range of learning opportunities in inner London. The range includes certificated courses such as City & Guilds, RSA, BTEC, GCSE and London Open College Federation accredited courses across a broad spectrum of vocational areas including business studies, office skills, catering, construction and recreation/leisure; basic education (literacy and numeracy); English as a Second Language; return to study/fresh start (aimed at people wanting to go on to further study); access to higher education in a variety of academic and professional areas. There are therefore in-built progression routes between one area of provision and another.

Our questionnaire was designed to elicit responses on what we perceived to be the central issues around student finance. The main areas we identified were:

* modes of study
* target groups
* progression routes
* recruitment patterns

- patterns of student finance during 1989/90
- likely changes in the pattern of student finance during 1990/1
- effects of DSS regulations on part-time students registered as unemployed
- the effects of the Employment Service's measures to counsel the long-term unemployed back into employment on students studying under the 21-Hour rule
- strategies adopted to support adult students within institutions
- the impact of Employment Training upon education/training provision for adults

In addition to conducting a questionnaire survey of adult tutors, we decided to write to each of the 13 new LEAs in inner London asking them to supply us with information regarding their policies on fees and discretionary awards since the picture, even by late summer 1990, still appeared to be rather uncertain.

During the course of the project, and as a result of the work done on the earlier three-weekly bulletins, we were also in contact with key people involved in supporting adult returners to education/training including: borough awards officers, LEA advisers, post-16 officers, student services officers, adult education advice and guidance services, some Training Agency staff and others. These people proved invaluable as sources of information, advice and guidance on the issues.

THE INNER LONDON BOROUGHS' INHERITANCE

In 1980, Her Majesty's Inspector's report on the work of the ILEA concluded that its adult education service 'provides a range of opportunities unmatched in any other part of the country'.

The HMI inspection noted, with reference to the work of the (then) Chelsea-Westminster Institute, that:

> The authority has made possible a level of provision in which the opportunities available, the number of students involved and the investment of resources to secure that provision is considerable. Even so the inspection indicated that in certain areas of work provision fell short of demand and/or need. **('The Jewel in the Crown,' ILEA,1988)**

An ILEA survey, **'Changing Course:Community Education in Inner London', ILEA 1986-87,** highlighted disadvantage within inner London and the attempts by ILEA to prioritise those who are educationally disadvantaged.The survey found that over a quarter were using the adult education institutes for work-related needs and a fifth wanted a specific qualification.

A 1988 HMI report, preparing for what was to be a review of ILEA's performance in 1991, concluded that standards of provision in non-advanced further education 'are generally good and in some cases excellent....the proportion of good work seen in ILEA's colleges was significantly higher than that for the country as a whole.' **('ILEA News', March 1988).** The HMI Report also classified ILEA's adult education as a 'first rate service in every respect. The range of provision and the service's responsiveness to need at local level are both first rate'. Whilst recognising that ILEA's provision crosses borough boundaries, sometimes untidily, the report concluded:

> In FE, AE and Youth there is a preponderance of good quality provision and high standards, despite the unique range of needs and demands presented by the ILEA's circumstances.

It is clear from the 1988 HMI report that the language of local delivery, multi-agency delivery and the need for responsiveness found in the White paper, 'Employment for the 1990s', finds an echo in many of the assessments on ILEA and its provision for adults.

The ILEA Chief Inspector's report in 1989 provides what is perhaps the clearest picture of ILEA's success in its network of adult provision.

* ILEA's 17 AEI's enrolled more than 300,000 students.
* Aided establishments and community education centres accepted a further 26,000 adult students
* ILEA's 14 general and 2 specialist further education colleges enrolled some 100,000 students a year

The majority of students in general colleges came from inner London but only a minority - as low as 25% - lived in the local borough.

Both the 1988 HMI report and the 1989 ILEA Chief Inspector's report testify to the numbers of people who used and benefited from ILEA's adult education service. **'Londoners Learning'**, an ILEA/NIACE survey of adult learners in inner London in 1990, provides a picture of ILEA's adult provision at the point of handover to the boroughs.

* 17% of adults interviewed in London are engaged in some form of study.

- Nationally, women outnumber men by more than two to one.
- ILEA achieved higher levels of participation amongst unskilled workers and their families but significantly lower levels amongst skilled working class and lower middle class workers.
- Within inner London, attendance at college was the preferred method of study.
- A clear formalised structure for learning seemed to encourage informal methods of study. Indeed, in London, 'adults are engaged with learning across the range of formal, informal and leisure activities to a greater extent than elsewhere'.
- The report notes ILEA's success in 'its adult education programme (despite lower C2 participation), its Access courses and progression arrangements'
- Strategic support across the whole of post-compulsory education and training is needed if all are to benefit equally.

In terms of Access course provision, Greater London provides 150 Access courses in 47 institutions. By far the highest number of courses and providing institutions, ILEA itself provided 19% of the Access courses in England. Part time modes of study predominate - 93% of courses include part time students. **('A survey of Access Courses to higher education: analysis and prospects', CNAA Briefing Paper, April 1990)**

As an education authority, the ILEA constructed a framework that enabled a unity of provision across the capital. Not least amongst this framework of enablement was a conscious awareness that the financing of study for those wanting a second chance at learning presented a major barrier.

Indeed, a Forum for Access Studies preliminary survey of student funding, issued in October 1989, noted:

> many individual financial support systems are delicate, precarious and complex; the individual's access to the resources needed to study may therefore be vulnerable to very small changes in the systems which surround the financial juggling act in which many students are engaged. **('The Financial Situation Of Access Students: Report Of An Indicative Survey', FAST, October 1989).**

A number of ILEA's policies, stemming from its strong commitment to equal opportunities, including the provision of discretionary awards, concessionary fees and cross-borough ease of movement (partly through recoupment arrangements) enabled many adults to return to education/training who would not otherwise have been able to do so because of prohibitive financial costs.

The maintenance of the broad range and wide network of educational provision for adults as well as the policies and structures which facilitated access to it, was one of the many challenges that the 13 inner London boroughs inherited when, as newly formed LEAs, they took over responsibility for education from the ILEA in April 1990.

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act the new inner London LEAs have a statutory obligation to provide 'adequate facilities for further education' for people over compulsory school age including full-time and part-time 'vocational, social, physical and recreational' education/training. As well as being required to respond to the needs of the local community, LEAs have powers to provide further education '...for persons living outside their area'. They are also required to take into consideration the needs of those '...over compulsory school age who have learning difficulties'. **(Education Reform Act, 1988, Part II, Section 41)**

Since educational provision in inner London had been planned on a cross-borough basis, a continuing element of London-wide strategic planning was clearly necessary after the abolition of the ILEA. Mechanisms were therefore established to ensure that cross-borough

planning and ease of movement continued. The Inner London Education Advisory Council (ILEAC) was set up to ease the transition from the ILEA to the 13 new LEAs and has since been dismantled. It attempted to reach a unified position across inner London on fee structures and the allocation of discretionary awards. In addition, the London and South East Region Advisory Council for Education and Training (LASERACET) plays a coordinating role and has attempted to secure strategic planning and unity of provision. Through regional FE Officers meetings, it has also been involved in negotiations on formulating a unified policy on concessionary fees by acting as a 'free broker'.

THE CASE FOR ADULT LEARNING IN THE 1990'S: DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND SKILL SHORTAGES

There are pressures to increase adult participation in education/training in the 1990s from two closely related directions: demographic changes and skill shortages in the labour market.

The demographic changes which are taking place are well-documented: the number of 16-19 year olds is rapidly falling and this decline is expected to reach a peak in 1993/4. This has two consequences for adult participation rates in education/training. The projected shortfall of 1 million young people aged 16-19 will steadily affect the number of recruits to further education. Not only is the pool of available 16-19 year-olds diminishing; further education is, as a National Asssociation of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) report on the implications of demographic changes for FE has noted, facing 'fierce competitive bids from employers' which could result in fewer young people going on to FE. There is, therefore, a clear need for colleges 'to recruit many more students from other age groups if they are to continue to operate at their present levels'. Within the adult population, those currently under-represented in post-school education are obvious targets: women, ethnic minorities, those in employment who have received little in the way of vocational training and the unemployed. **('A Million New Students: The Challenge for FE', NATFHE, April 1990)**

Our survey of adult Access and Return-to-Learning Courses in inner London revealed that:

29% are aimed at those wanting further education/vocational training.
12% are aimed at those wanting to go on to higher education.
27% are aimed at those who are educationally disadvantaged.
15% are aimed at ethnic minorities.
15% are aimed at the unemployed.
10% are aimed at women returners.

Clearly then, the post-compulsory sector of education is already doing much to attract under-represented groups, but this effort will need to be intensified, especially in FE, in order to maintain present numbers.

A second conseqence of demographic change for adult participation in education/training flows from the need to attract more skilled adult workers into the labour force at a time when the supply of young people is rapidly diminishing. Post-compulsory education clearly has a crucial role to play in ensuring a steady supply of trained and re-skilled adults who can make up for this shortfall. Likely target groups will be those currently under-represented in the labour force and over-represented in unemployment figures (such as women, ethnic minorities and those with disabilities).

Indeed, official estimates suggest that of the projected 1 million growth in the labour force up to the year 2000, 90% will be accounted for by women **('Labour Market & Skill Trends, 1990/1', Training Agency, August 1989; 'The Under-Utilisation of the Labour Market', IMS Report No. 172, 1989)**. However, these are national projections: for the Greater London area it is estimated that both the male and female working age population will decline during the period 1990-1995. In London, then, there is a more pronounced economic need for these dwindling human resources to be utilized to maximum efficiency - which means that education has a crucial role to play in producing trained and skilled adult workers.

The decline in recruits to the labour force amongst young people is not, however, the only reason why more adults need to be trained and re-skilled. In addition, the economy is facing severe skill shortages in some occupational areas which can only be met by highly skilled

adults returning to the labour force. The Training Agency has reported that about 25% of employers in London have classified their recruitment problems as being due to 'skill shortages'. In practice, however, it appears that these shortages are highly concentrated in specific areas. In a TA survey of London employers, it was found that of 13 Training Occupation Classification (TOC) areas with reported skill shortages, the highest rates were in the following :

A - Administrative & clerical (34%)
X - Electrical, Electronic and Mechanical Engineering (16%).
K - Construction (14%) .

Within TOC A, key shortages were identified in finance and business services, especially of information technology specialists and professionals such as accountants. Within TOC's K and X, key shortages of 'professionaly qualified staff' as well as 'a wide spectrum of craft skills' were identified by employers. **('Training & Enterprise: Priorities for Action 1990/91', Labour Market Supplement, London Region, TA, July 1989)**

Clearly then, 'skill shortages' lie predominantly in highly trained and skilled, often graduate, professions. Indeed, a NATFHE report on demand for higher education in the 1990s notes that, nationally, over half the major recruiters of graduates reported shortages in 1989 **('Higher Education: Future Student Demand and Economic Need', NATFHE, April 1990)**. In the context of the London labour market, where it is estimated that more than 10% of jobs require graduate skills and around 67% of London residents are in non-manual occupations (compared to just over 50% for Britain as a whole), graduate shortages are likely to be more pronounced. **('Training & Enterprise: Priorites for Action 1990/91', TA, July 1989)**

The Government's 1987 White Paper on Higher Education noted the economy's increased demand for graduates, especially in shortage areas such as science and engineering. It recognised that, in order to make up for the shortfall in the numbers of young people entering higher education, it would be necessary to increase Access course provision so that more adults could enter higher education. **(1987 White Paper on Higher Education, Sects. 210-221)**

Much educational provision for adults in London has progression routes to higher education.

Our survey revealed that:

20% of adult courses contain students who progress to Access courses
50% of adult courses contain students who progress to higher education.

Post-compulsory education in London thus plays a vital role in providing opportunities for adults to acquire the high level of skills required by the modern economy.

However, it is not only specialist, professional and vocational skills which are required by industry. Indeed, modern labour market trends indicate a need for workers who have a strong base in core skills such as communication, literacy and numeracy which are easily transferable to a wide variety of constantly changing occupational areas. The 1987 White Paper on Higher Education noted that employers also value graduates in the arts, humanities and social sciences because study within these disciplines develops 'analytic, critical and communication skills' **(1987 White Paper on Higher Education, sect. 2.11)**

The TUC has recently commented that 'there are no longer any jobs that will last, unchanged, for a working life'. The danger of too narrow a focus on vocational training is that:

> people are streamed into specific vocational routes from which they then cannot escape. This harms their chances in life, but it also builds into the British economy an inflexibility that will make us slow to react to change. Our experience is that those with a sound educational base to their skills are best able to adapt and update those skills. **('Skills 2000', TUC 1989)**

This increasing need for a workforce possessing a firm educational grounding to their skills is supported by the Training Agency which has stressed 'the likelihood of further shifts from manual to non-manual and from skill to knowledge based work'. Moreover, competitive pressures will necessitate 'responses in terms of quality, innovation and flexibility.' **('Training & Enterprise: Priorities for Action 1990/91' TA., July 1989).** The CBI has also pointed to the skills gap between Britain and its competitors and has emphasised the urgent necessity of a 'skills revolution': the Government should provide funding to secure 'the foundation skills which the nation requires' as a matter of 'foremost priority'. **('Towards a Skills Revolution', CBI, 1989).**

A recent survey on numeracy conducted for the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), the BBC and the Training Agency lends support to claims that there is an urgent need to equip adults with foundation skills. It found that at least 3.5 million adults were unable to do simple calculations. Commenting on the survey results, ALBSU noted the implications in terms of Britain's industrial competitiveness and stated: 'There is a crying need for work to be done amongst adults'.**("Everyday sums 'too hard for 3.5m adults' ", The Guardian, 9/10/90)**

It seems that there is a consensus between the Government, the Training Agency, CBI and TUC on the urgent need to invest in a firm foundation of transferable, broadly based core skills if Britain is to overcome its skills gap and maintain its industrial competitiveness.

Educational provision for adults in London plays a key role in enabling the acquisition of core skills as well as facilitating progression onto other, higher level courses leading to vocational, professional and academic qualifications. Indeed, the further and higher education system is already the largest provider of education and training nationally. **('Training In Britain: A study of Funding, Activity and Attitudes', TA, 1989).** As the CBI has commented, people must be personally motivated to undertake education and training:

> Training must be seen by people as an investment. It must not be regarded as something that is 'done' to them but as an opportunity to exercise some choice over their future careers. **(CBI,'Towards a Skills Revolution', 1989).**

The role of further, adult and higher education in London in the provision of opportunities for adults to acquire a broad knowledge and skills base is especially significant in view of the fact that amongst London's unemployed - who must be expected to make up part of the labour market shortfall predicted during the 1990s - 48% have no qualifications or only low grade CSE's. Moreover, 17% have literacy/numeracy needs, especially the long-term unemployed, and of these, half felt this affected their chances of getting the work they wanted. **('Training & Enterprise: Priorities for Action 1990/1', TA, July 1989)**

STUDY UNDER THE 21-HOUR RULE

Background

Since much educational provision for adults does not attract grants, many people take advantage of benefit regulations which permit them to study part-time, for up to 21 hours per week, whilst signing on as unemployed.

Our survey revealed that:

73% of adult courses in London contained students studying under the 21-Hour Rule.
67% were various forms of Return-to-Learning provision.
33% were Access courses.

44% of tutors claimed that studying under the 21-Hour Rule whilst in receipt of benefit was the most common means of student finance for their courses.

The range of provision operating under the 21-Hour Rule is varied and includes, besides Access courses in a variety of subject areas, courses offering vocational qualifications such as City & Guilds , RSA and BTEC as well as many Fresh Start and Return to Study courses. Study under the 21-Hour Rule plays a major role in providing opportunities for adults to re-skill.

The 21-Hour Rule was introduced in 1971 with the aim of permitting those registered as unemployed - especially young people - to study for up to three days a week whilst in receipt of benefit. It was later revised so that study could take place over five or six days a week providing the claimant was available for work and prepared to drop the course of study if a job became available.

Since the 21-hour Rule was first introduced, a number of revisions have been made. There are now essentially four conditions which have to be met:

The course must :

* be held at a recognised educational institution. Originally, the 21-Hour Rule was intended to apply to non-advanced FE; this was subsequently revised and the level of course is no longer relevant so long as benefit regulations are satisfied. **(Hansard WA col 321, 24/5/90)**

* not exceed 21 hours per week. Meal breaks and unsupervised private study is not counted: the 21 hours refers only to time spent in the classroom and any other supervised contact

The claimant must:

* have been in receipt of UB, IS or Sickness Benefit ***either*** for 3 months continuously ***or*** for 3 of the last 6 months prior to the start of the course (People who have been on ET or YT are not required to fulfill this 3 month condition)

* be prepared to terminate the course as soon as a suitable job vacancy becomes available. **(Income Support (General) Regulations SI 1987/1967 Reg 9)**

Although the 21-Hour rule has offered a means for many unemployed people to take advantage of educational opportunites - indeed, much provision for adults has been established specifically to operate under the 21-Hour Rule - it has become more difficult to do so due to increasingly restrictive benefit regulations.

The 1989 Social Security Act

Major changes to the regulations surrounding claiming benefit whilst unemployed were introduced by the 1989 Social Security Act which came into effect in October of that year. In addition to being available for work, claimants now have to prove that they are ***'actively seeking work'.*** They are expected to take 'reasonable' steps to find work every week - such as visits to Job-Centres and employment agencies, looking for job advertisements in newspapers/journals etc. - and keep records demonstrating that they are doing so. Job-search activity can be checked by the Employment Service at any time and claimants who are thought not to be satisfying the condition are so 'advised' and can subsequntly lose benefit for one or two weeks.

Those engaged in part-time study under the 21-Hour Rule are not exempt from 'actively seeking work' regulations. Indeed, although a clause was inserted into the legislation stating that part-time study should be taken into account (after concerns were expressed in Parliament by the Opposition regarding how it would affect those studying under the 21-Hour Rule) it does not replace the requirement to actively seek work. In other words, engaging in part-time study is not recognised to be, in itself, a means of 'actively seeking work'. This was made clear in a Ministerial statement made prior to the introduction of the regulations:

> I do not believe that simply because a person is engaged in part-time study, he or she should be exempt from any requirements to take steps actively to seek work. The fact that a person is studying should be part of the pattern that is taken into account when a judgment is made about the totality of the effort that is being made to get back into employment. **(Hansard WA col 995-6, 26/4/89).**

There appears to be a lack of awareness on the part of the Government that many people studying under the 21-Hour Rule are doing so precisely ***because*** they see it as a route, albeit in some cases long-term, back into employment. Consequently, many part-time students subject to the 'actively seeking work' regulations are experiencing great difficulties and, in some cases, being forced to abandon their studies.

Our survey found that:

> **52% of tutors reported that students on benefits had experienced difficulties as a direct result of DSS 'actively seeking work' regulations**
>
> **The main effects cited were:**
> **32% reported students suffering anxiety as a result of the regulations**
> **24% reported students' attendance being adversely affected**
> **6% reported students experiencing difficulties with concentration**
> **5% reported students' progress being affected due to having to take up part-time work**
> **5% reported students feeling that part-time study had been devalued by the regulations**
> **5% reported students abandoning their course of study.**

Ministerial assurances that undertaking part-time study should be 'taken into account' under the actively seeking work regulations sharply conflicts with this evidence of disruption to the point, in some cases, where claimants are forced to abandon their studies altogether. One Access tutor claimed that '(students) miss many classes and are distracted from studies by anxiety'. Another commented: 'Who can study if you have to tell lies to the DSS?' Indeed, tutors are very concerned about the longer-term effects of the regulations upon educational provision for adults: 42% cited benefit regulations as a cause for concern when asked what factors they thought would be most likely to affect recruitment for 1990/1.

Support Strategies Adopted by Institutions

Faced with the disruptive effects that the latest Social Security regulations are having on students on benefits - as well as much educational provision - institutions have, in the year since the regulations were introduced, adopted a variety of measures in an endeavour to alleviate some of the pressures which these students face.

Our survey found that:

> **68% of respondents reported that their institutions had adopted specific strategies to support students on benefits.**

Of these:

> **73% had established advice sessions for students on benefits.**
> **38% had set up job-search activites to enable students on benefits to fulfill 'actively seeking work' regulations**
> **33% had adopted curriculum changes in an endeavour to make it easier for people on benefits to study.**

The fact that institutions have been forced to implement these strategies is an indication of the impact which the regulations are having on providers of education for adults. However, they are clearly short-term attempts to alleviate the increasing pressures on claimants studying under the 21-Hour Rule rather than long-term solutions to the problem of inadequate financial support for adults who wish to return to education and training.

Our survey revealed that the effects of Social Security regulations is one of the issues of central concern to adult tutors in assessing how learning opportunities for adults in London could be improved.

> **17% felt that Social Security regulations presently constituted a barrier to learning.**

Many tutors suggested that the most positive way forward would be for study under the 21-Hour Rule to be recognised as a means, in itself, of 'actively seeking work'. One tutor suggested that agreement was needed about the real meaning of 'actively seeking work'. Another pointed to the diversity in local interpretation of the regulations: 'DSS staff apparently all interpret the rules differently'. Indeed, the paradox that the 1989 Social Security Act. '....penalises those unemployed who use successful, but the least observable, job search strategies' was noted prior to the implementation of the legislation. **('Through the grapevine', The Guardian, 4/10/89)**

Restart

The Restart programme was introduced by the Government in 1986. The aim of the scheme was to offer counselling to the long-term unemployed to help them to get back into jobs. This was to be achieved by means of six-monthly interviews. The interviews are compulsory: failure to attend after two notifications results in loss of benefit. A 'positive outcome' of the interview is the claimant choosing an item from the Restart 'menu'. This menu of options has been revised since the scheme was first introduced and presently consists of referral to one of the following:

- a job vacancy
- a Job-club
- Employment Training
- a Restart course
- the Enterprise Allowance Scheme

(Hansard col 67 21/5/90)

Study under the 21-hour Rule is not included on the Restart 'menu' and there is no procedure for recording part-time study as a successful outcome of a Restart interview. Nevertheless, the Chief Executive of the Employment Service has stated that Restart Counsellors are guided by local labour market conditions in helping claimants to assess what will help them back into employment and this '...would include courses of study under the so called 21-Hour rule'. However, since Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers lack information about educational opportunities available to adults and are not trained to give educational advice, it is doubtful, in practice, whether this assurance carries any meaning. **(Virginia Heywood, 'The 21-Hour Rule', Unemployment Bulletin, 33, Summer 1990).**

Part-time students on benefits therefore experience difficulties in persuading Restart Counsellors that their course of study - as opposed to one of the options on the 'menu' - is a valid route into employment. Indeed, claimants undertaking courses of study under the 21-Hour Rule are often forced to abandon their studies through pressures from Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers.

Our survey found that:

35% of tutors claimed that students had been forced to give up their course due to pressures from the Employment Service.

Of these:

51% said students had been forced to abandon their studies due to anxieties created by interviews with Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers.

29% said students abandoned their course due to pressure to take up employment.

19% said that students had been forced to abandon their course in order to take up a place on an Employment Training scheme

15% said students abandoned their course because of threats to/loss of benefit.

Even where students are able to continue their studies, they still face disruption and anxiety as a direct consequence of the Restart process. One Access course tutor stated: 'Students having to attend Restart interviews on a regular basis find it difficult to study as they have to miss classes and they find it hard to concentrate on assignments'. Another tutor of an adult foundation course commented that students find the regular interviews and forms they have to complete prior to the interview 'very stressful and intimidating'.

Despite assurances from the Employment Service that study under the 21-Hour Rule *is* a valid option the evidence in London, at least, points to the contrary. This is hardly surprising given that part-time study is not an item on the Restart 'menu' - it can only be presumed that where 21-Hour students are not coming under pressure this is because individual Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers are choosing to interpret the 'menu' more widely. Nevertheless, the fact that study under the 21-Hour Rule is not among the list of options available to the long-term unemployed to help them back into employment suggests that its value is not officially recognized.

This absence also points to an anomaly in Government policy. On the one hand, Ministers have recognised that:

> the option to pursue a course of study within the terms of the 21-Hour rule may be considered an appropriate way of helping people back into work. In such circumstances it would be regarded as a positive outcome of a Restart interview.**(Hansard col 737, 4/3/88)**

However, since part-time study is not included on the 'menu' it cannot be officially recorded as a 'positive outcome'. On the other hand, since engaging in part-time study under the 21-Hour rule is not recognised as a means of 'actively seeking work' the chances of unemployed people being able to take meaningful advantage of part-time courses of study are clearly limited. It is not surprising, therefore, that students attempting to study under the 21-Hour Rule experience immense difficulties and, in many instances, are forced to abandon their studies altogether.

Although the Restart programme was introduced as a measure to help long-term unemployed people back into employment, a recent report has indicated that it seems to have been unsuccessful in this endeavour. The report was inspired by the 'peculiar phenomenon' that, despite adverse economic trends, unemployment has continued to fall spectacularly in recent years. This is explained in terms of the Restart programme's 'recycling' of the long-term unemployed: once claimants take up an option on the Restart 'menu' they are removed from the unemployment register - and if they return they are no longer classified as long-term unemployed.

Indeed, although the report bemoans the lack of Government information regarding the outcomes of Restart interviews, it notes that civil service figures reveal low rates, both of referrals at Restart interviews and of actual take up of options on the 'menu'. The report concludes that '...as a way of counselling unemployed people or providing them with access to training or to work, Restart appears to be falling short of its self-stated aims'. **(see 'Where Have All The Unemployed Gone?', The Guardian, 8/6/90).** This conclusion highlights the unfairness of the punitive effects of Restart on those attempting to study under the 21-Hour Rule. For it appears that such claimants are, in many instances, enduring anxieties purely for the sake of a programme which offers options which are likely to be inferior to, and less successful than, their own preferred route to securing future employment.

Despite this revelation of the limited value of Restart, the Government seems set on it continuing - and is, indeed, intensifying the efforts to counsel long-term unemployed people back into employment. In April 1990, the Secretary of State for Employment announced a new package of measures to help unemployed people back to work. These include:

* combined roles for Restart Counsellors and Claimant Advisers: each claimant should be seen by the same adviser throughout any period of unemployment.

* advisory interviews should take place every 13 weeks (instead of 26 weeks)

* more systematic follow-up of those who fail to take up places on ET, Jobclubs, Restart courses etc.

- extra intensive counselling and advice for those who have been unemployed for two years or more.
  (Department of Employment, Press Release, 4/4/90)

It has subsequently emerged that the latter provision will consist of compulsory Restart courses for those who 'have been unemployed for two years or more and who, at their next Restart interview, reject all offers of help'. Those who fail to attend will lose a proportion of their benefit for a period equivalent to the length of the course (one week). The compulsory courses, redesignated 'Options Courses', are due to be introduced in the Autumn, 1990 **(see Working Brief, Unemployment Unit/Youthaid, July 1990)**.

However, just as the scheme in general appears to have failed in meeting its self-stated aims, evidence suggests that Restart courses - aimed at those 'who may not be sure which option to take up or who may not be ready to make a decision' - have not been perceived by participants to have been useful in helping them to make a decision regarding how best to get back into employment. A Psychological Service Report found that nearly 20% of Restart Course participants felt that it had not been useful/not at all useful. Moreover, an OPCS survey of unemployed people found that around 33% of those who had been on a Restart Course thought it was 'poor' **(see Working Brief, Unemployment Unit/Youthaid, October 1990)**.

The new measures fail to make any mention of study under the 21-Hour rule - the Restart 'menu' remains as before. It seems, therefore, that the new, stricter measures to monitor the long-term unemployed are likely to make life even more difficult for those attempting to engage in part-time study and increase the anxieties and disruption for those who are still able, in this harsher climate, to sustain their course of study.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Background

The Employment Training Programme came into effect in September 1988 with the aim of giving 'longer-term unemployed people the skills they need to get and keep jobs' and providing 'a broad range of training from basic skills to those required in high technology industries.'**(White Paper:'Training For Employment', February 1988).**

The rationale behind the programme was to unify existing schemes for helping long-term unemployed adults back into employment. The intention was to target the programme on two priority groups:

- those in the 18-24 age range who had been unemployed for 6-12 months.
- those in the 18-50 age range who had been unemployed for more than 2 years.

Unemployed adults were to be recruited mainly through Restart interviews and referred to an ET Training Agent who would, during 2-3 days of assessment and counselling, draw up a 'personal action plan' with the potential trainee. The person would then be referred to an ET Training Manager responsible for delivery of the agreed training. Trainees would be entitled to up to 12 months training which was to be divided into approximately 60% 'practical' (work placement) and 40% 'directed' (off-the-job) training.

It was envisaged that Training Managers would be drawn from local authorities, employers, voluntary sector organisations and private training agencies. Training Managers could either provide training in-house or sub-contract to conventional education/training providers.

College and Adult Education-based ET

Many colleges and adult education institutes have become ET Training Managers offering a wide range of vocational training as well as foundation training for those with literacy/numeracy or ESL needs. Some are offering foundation training support to employer-based training schemes. A Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) survey found that 32% of ET schemes in London were college-based and that evidence from trainees suggested that this provision was of a superior quality when compared with that in the voluntary or private sectors **(CAITS, 'Scrounging For Skills', October 1989).** In some cases, ET trainees are 'in-filled' onto existing courses.

Our survey found that:

> **20% of Access and Return-to-Learning courses in London contained ET trainees during 1989/90.**
>
> **Of these, 5% were Access courses covering a range of professional, vocational and academic areas.**

Access students have increasingly been funded by ET. A REPLAN survey of Access under ET in the West Midlands revealed that by March 1990,15% of Access students were on ET. There are positive as well as negative aspects to this development. From the point of view of potential trainees, there are financial incentives. Those on ET schemes receive £10 per week on top of their benefit and may be entitled to travel allowance (although they have to

find the first £4) and, in the case of single parents, child-care allowance. Thus, as the REPLAN briefing paper points out, Access under ET can offer providers:

> an opportunity to establish or strengthen a range of provision which is attractive to the community generally, but which can be accessed by unemployed adults who might otherwise be prevented from participation on grounds of cost, childcare, lack of confidence, or for other reasons.
> **('Access Courses Within Employment Training: A REPLAN Survey', June 1990)**

These extra payments would appear to be inadequate, particularly for trainees who have to meet the high costs of living in London: CAITS found that 50% of respondents to its survey of trainees were experiencing financial difficulties. Nevertheless, ET schemes may offer some financial attractions to unemployed adults when compared with mainstream college and adult education provision for which fees have to be paid and for which financial support for travel, child-care, books and equipment is not usually available. In addition, unemployed people on ET schemes are not subject to benefit regulations regarding 'availability' for and 'actively seeking' work and so do not have to contend with these additional pressures.

Access students who are funded by ET are subject to standard ET criteria: 30 hours of training per week which must be 'vocationally relevant'. In addition, the mixture of 'practical' and 'directed' training would indicate that some areas of Access provision are likely to be more amenable than others to ET conversion (although the 60/40% requirement has been removed). Most significantly, perhaps, concerns have been expressed that the move to operate and fund Access courses under ET represents an increasing encroachment on the ability of education providers to plan and deliver the Access offer according to perceived local educational needs. Peter Wilson, chair of the Forum for Access Studies (FAST) has commented:

> We are in the process of moving from a definition of Access developed by practitioners and rooted in a concept of individual rights to educational opportunities towards a different definition of access developed by policy-makers and rooted in a concept of the future needs of the labour market.
> **("Access to Higher Education: Looking Beyond the 'Consensus' ", NATFHE Journal, March/April 1990)**

As previously indicated, Access courses already play an important role in meeting the needs of the labour market for highly trained and skilled adults. However, there is a real danger of Access provision losing sight of its much acclaimed fundamental objective of providing opportunities for adults from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in higher education if it becomes subsumed under a scheme which is targetted only at the long-term unemployed.

College and AEI based ET schemes generally may prove to be significant in upholding quality now that the requirement for a 40/60% mixture of 'directed' and 'practical' training has been removed. For there is an increasing danger that ET 'may turn into a cheap labour recruitment scheme with little formal training' **(John Mabbott, 'Sounding The Death Knell For ET', Training Tomorrow)**. Nevertheless, although some colleges and adult education institutes may be taking advantage of ET to fund existing courses and alleviate some of the financial and benefit pressures on students, this can only be seen as a means of plugging a gap in student funding provision. College and AEI Access and Return-to-Learning courses in London have an established reputation which ET could potentially damage. This is reflected in the concerns of tutors over the future development of ET and its impact on mainstream educational provision for adults.

Our survey found that:

> **22% of Access and Return-to-Learning tutors perceived ET as a factor adversely affecting recruitment for 1990/91.**

The Shortcomings of ET

In the two years since ET was first introduced, evidence has emerged to support concerns which were voiced at its inception regarding the underlying aim of the scheme and the quality of the training it offered. Foremost amongst these has been the claim that ET is seriously underfunded. A recent report by the House of Commons Select Committeee on Employment has noted that the original budget of just under £1.5b announced in November 1988 has been gradually eroded: by Autumn 1989 it amounted to £1.2b and a further 30% cut in training expenditure was announced in Spring 1990. The Select Committee received evidence from one ET Training Manager which indicated that it was attempting to provide training for less than £1 per hour. The number of places on the scheme have also been revised downwards from the originally envisaged 600,000 a year to an estimated 215,000 places for 1990/1. The reason given by the Director General of the Training Agency for this downward revision was a 36% drop in long-term unemployment. **(House of Commons, Employment Committee, 3rd Report, Employment Training, May 1990)**

This downward revision in budget allocation/places casts doubt on the claim that the programme is tied firmly to the needs of the labour market and lends support to the claims of those who would argue that the underlying aim of the scheme is simply that of reducing unemployment figures. Indeed, as a recent critique of ET has commented: 'as long as funding is linked to absolute unemployment levels there is bound to be a fluctuating commitment to it from Government'. **(John Mabbott, 'Sounding The Death Knell For ET', Training Tomorrow)**

A central focus for concern has been the quality of training offered under ET. The CAITS survey of ET in London found evidence of 'a lack of high quality training and in some cases a complete absence of any training'. **(CAITS, 'Scrounging For Skills', October 1989).** One explanation for this can be found in the national failure of the quality control mechanism for ET: it was recently revealed that of the 1,500 Training Agents and Managers responsible for initial assessment and delivery of training, only 3 had received full 'Approved Training Organisation' status by July 1990 - nearly two years after the programme was first implemented. The deadline for Training Agents/Managers to achieve full approved status expired in August and has now been extended to 22 December 1990. **("ET training Approval Process 'near to collapse'",The Independent, 14.7.90; Unemployment Unit, Working Brief, October 1990)**

In addition to quality there are concerns about the lack of progression routes on ET. Although the programme was set up on the basis of an entitlement of 12 months training, it was costed on the basis of an average of 6 months. Doubts have been expressed about the adequacy of 6 or even 12 months training, especially when the needs of the ET client group - the long-term unemployed - are taken into account. The Select Committee noted that 'many of these needed intensive training in literacy and numeracy, or were difficult to place because of chronic illness or mental problems'. Indeed, evidence revealed that 16% of trainees had literacy and numeracy needs and, as unemployment fell, the proportion of unemployed people with specific problems was likely to increase **(House of Commons, Employment Committee, 3rd Report, Employment Training, May 1990).** It is clearly unrealistic to expect that people with literacy/numeracy needs or with long-term emotional problems or physical disabilities will benefit very much from the 12 months entitlement to training offered under ET without further progression onto other forms of education/training.

There are further concerns regarding both the high drop-out rate on ET and evidence of compulsion - despite the fact that the scheme was promoted from the outset as voluntary. Indeed, these issues are likely to be closely related: if people are not motivated to undertake the training offered in the first instance but do so because they feel under pressure, it is hardly surprising that many drop out. The Select Committee on Employment found that 70% of those who agree a 'personal action plan' under ET do not complete it. In addition, there is evidence that some people interviewed by the Employment Service drop-out before reaching ET because of problems with literacy and numeracy - reinforcing the point made above that the scheme is failing to meet their needs. The Select Committee concluded that 'these very high drop-out rates represent a waste of public money and a failure of the programme to give trainees the skills they need to find jobs and careers'. **(Employment Committee, 3rd Report, Employment Training).**

Perceptions of the scheme as compulsory may well be an important factor contributing to high drop-out rates. The CAITS survey of ET trainees in London found that 37% had experienced threats to benefits or claimed to have joined the scheme involuntarily. This evidence conflicts sharply with the scheme's stated intention of encouraging individuals to take a greater interest in their own personal development.

Perhaps the most damaging criticism of ET is its failure to meet its central goal: preparing unemployed people for jobs and careers. Although the Training Agency has reported that 55% obtained employment subsequent to completing their training, 42% returned to the unemployment register. It is doubtful, then, whether ET can really be seen as the nation's answer to skill shortages and Britain's failing industrial competitiveness. **(Employment Committee, 3rd Report, Employment Training).**

The Future of ET

Responsibility for ET is being devolved to Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) - local, employer-led bodies comprised of 2/3 local business leaders with the remaining 1/3 made up of representatives from education, trade unions and local authorities. The Government has faced mounting criticism from employers who are expected to run TECs over inadequate funding and strict operating procedures which limit their freedom to run the councils according to local labour market conditions - the very rationale behind creating the TECs.

Indeed, employers have been so outraged as to speak of 'a clash of cultures' between the Department of Employment and the private sector **("Britain's Dire Skills Crisis Further Heightened by 'clash of cultures' ", The Guardian, 23.3.90).** After announcing a 30% cut in funding (£350m over 3 years) on the grounds of a drop in unemployment, the Government finally made a concession on 'ring-fencing' the funds made available to TECs - they would be given a lump sum and allowed to distribute it as they wished to training schemes such as ET and YT. **('Finance Policy for Training Reviewed', The Independent, 2.7.90).**

However, the row has not abated and employers have stated that they are 'deeply disillusioned' by the cuts and seeming lack of Government commitment to training so that the scheme bears 'little resemblance to the vision that attracted businessmen to TECs in the first instance' **('Training cash cuts anger businessmen', The Guardian, 8 August 1990).** The TECs are continuing to demand more money and greater flexibility in devising their own initiatives, especially on creating a unified training system for those already in work as well as the unemployed and young people. **('Employers to press Minister on training revolution pledge', The Guardian, 17.10.90).**

In the context of this ongoing dispute, the future of ET looks uncertain. With the employers disillusioned and cuts in TEC funding suggesting the Government's lack of long-term

commitment to training, the chances of ET being able to fill the 'skills gap' through quality training seem increasingly remote. Indeed, in the present economic climate of high interest rates, falling investment and increasing unemployment, employers are unlikely to prioritise long-term investment in training. The comment that it is unrealistic for the Government to expect '...the private sector to contribute more at a time when it is likely to contribute less' is perhaps an accurate assessment of the present situation regarding the state of training provision in Britain. **(John Mabbott, 'Sounding The Death Knell for ET', Training Tomorrow)**

THE NEW INNER LONDON LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES: FEES AND AWARDS

Discretionary Awards

The ILEA provided a number of discretionary awards for full-time and part-time Access courses, which it viewed as being worthy of special criteria.

The ILEA estimated that 14.6% of discretionary awards were made to Access courses during 1988/89. Applicants were not normally eligible for consideration unless they had been continuously ordinarily resident in Inner London for three years prior to the start of the academic year in which the course commenced. **(ILEA Awards Policy March 1989).**

In 1989, eighteen LEAs in addition to ILEA made major discretionary awards to students undertaking Access courses **(CNAA Briefing Paper, April 1990).**

Under the ILEA, discretionary awards were normally made to enable students to obtain recognised first qualifications by means of full-time study on courses of a year or more in length, normally at colleges in the public sector. Awards under the ILEA were made for courses of both further and higher education but not normally for post-graduate courses. Awards were usually made to students attending ILEA's own colleges.

Student support from this source of funding has, however, been limited.

Our survey revealed that:

> **19% of courses contained students in receipt of discretionary awards. On 11% of courses students were mainly financed by discretionary awards.**

Now that responsibility for education in inner London has been devolved to 13 new LEAs, many boroughs still view the funding of Access as a priority.

Islington, for example will fund Access courses 'as a matter of priority'. Kensington and Chelsea, ' ...will provide a number of full-time and part-time Access courses to prepare educationally disadvantaged students for entry to specific courses of advanced further or higher education.' Lewisham stipulate that, 'a large part of the discretionary awards budget has been set aside to fund adults on Access courses.'

Athough many of the new LEAs in inner London have indicated that they will make discretionary awards in accordance with previous ILEA policies, there are a number of changes that will have profound effects on students' ability to receive a discretionary award for a course of study.

Our survey revealed that:

> **23% of Access and Return-to-Learning tutors felt that uncertainties regarding discretionary awards would affect recruitment for 1990/91**

Most boroughs are now moving towards a 'tapering' arrangement regarding residency qualifications so that residency within a particular borough will become of prime importance. For 1990/91 residency within the borough at the date of application was usually stipulated. By 1992/3, a residency qualification of three years within the home borough will be required. Yet to provide a complete picture at this stage is difficult: many

boroughs will review their position on discretionary awards at the end of the present academic year (1990/91). Many of the new LEAs are concerned to give priority in allocating discretionary awards to students intending to study in institutions within their own borough boundaries.

Southwark, for example, has indicated that it intends to give priorty to students studying at Southwark College. Kensington and Chelsea intends to prioritise courses at Hammersmith and West London, City of Westminster and Westminster Colleges.The borough has stated that 'awards are only offered to students aged 19 or over taking courses at specified Colleges of Further Education, unless good reason can be proved for admission elsewhere'.

The implications of these policies have yet to become clear, but it seems likely that movement across London in order to study in other boroughs will become increasingly difficult. A situation may develop where many students are unable to pursue a course of study in a chosen subject because s/he has failed to secure a discretionary award from, or because that subject is not offered within, their 'home' borough.

Indeed, there is already evidence that adults are being denied access to educational opportunities - and the chance to re-train in skill-shortage areas. One tutor stated that of 19 potential students selected for an Access to Speech Therapy course, only 2 had been offered discretionary awards. The reasons why the majority of the students selected were refused discretionary awards were numerous but included boroughs having more applications than awards and not considering applications by the time the course was due to commence. Consequently, 9 students are attempting to survive the course with no means of financial support at all.

Concessionary Fees

ILEA operated a comprehensive range of concessionary fees categories which were widely regarded as of particular importance in enabling many inner London residents to take advantage of educational opportunities.

This fee structure was an important factor in 'the successful implementation of (ILEA's) equal opportunities policies' **('The Jewel in the Crown:Adult Education in Inner London', ILEA, 1988).**

Concessionary categories, which qualified for a rate of 5p per hour, up to a maximum of £10 per academic year included:

- people over sixty years of age
- people receiving (or a dependent of someone receiving) family credit, income support, invalidity benefit or severe disablement allowance
- people registered as unemployed
- people taking classes in literacy, basic education or English as a Second Language
- people under eighteen
- people enrolling with hearing, sight or learning disabilities.

The concessionary fee for a part-time course was £1.50 per term or £4.50 per year (with a maximum of £10 per year).

This coherent cross-London fees structure had the advantage that people could attend the nearest institution or, indeed, cross borough boundaries, and still be eligible for reduced rates. Recognising the importance of this, the new inner London LEAs attempted to achieve a common position on concessionary fees.

Most boroughs have agreed a concessionary fee of 10p per hour with a maximum of £15 per year for adult education courses.This represents a 100% increase in concessionary fees, taken at the hourly rate - although only a 50% increase in the concessionary fee ceiling. Wandsworth, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea LEAs, however, are operating different concessionary fee rates for adult education.

- Wandsworth offer a 75% discount on the standard fee up to a maximum of £15 per year.
- Kensington & Chelsea's concessionary rate is 16p per hour up to a maximum of £16 per year.
- Westminster's concessionary rate is 20p per hour up to a maximum of £40 per year.

In general, the new LEAs are operating the same concessionary fee rate in further as in adult education - ie: 10p per hour to a maximum of £15 per year. One exception is Westminster which has set widely different maxima for AE (£40 per year) and FE (£15 per year).

The apparent effect of the new concessionary fee rates for those on 20-hour courses in further or adult education is an average 300% increase. This could be potentially prohibitive for those on benefit for whom a £15 immediate outlay may prove too much.

Standard Fees

Under the ILEA, the standard rate for adult education courses was 55p per hour.

The standard fee for adult education under the new LEAs is generally 60p per hour for 1990/91. This would mean that the cost of, for example, a 2-hour weekly class would be aproximately £36 for an academic year at the standard rate. Islington and Hammersmith & Fulham, however, have set a standard fee of 65p per hour and Wandsworth and Westminster have standard adult education fees of 80p per hour.

For further education courses, fees were charged by the ILEA on the basis of days attended per week. For full-time courses, the standard fee was £449 per year.

The new inner London LEAs' FE standard rate is, in most cases, 52p per hour. There are, once again, discrepancies with, for example, Wandsworth setting a FE standard rate of 60p per hour. The full-time FE fee averages at £489 per year.

Cross-Borough Reciprocal Fee Arrangements

As has been noted, ILEA's provision was complex and inter-related. Under the new LEAs, concessionary 'free trade' agreements have been reached between boroughs with similar fee structures.

At the time of writing, negotiations are still continuing between boroughs on extending reciprocal arrangements on fees. This is, perhaps, testimony to the complexity of the negotiations - many boroughs have stressed that they will review the position on fees for the 1991/92 academic year. To date, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Wandsworth have had more difficulty in negotiating the optimum of reciprocal arrangements.

Camden LEA is operating a policy on concessionary fees for adult education that sets it at variance with other LEAs in inner London. It has stated that it '...will not extend its

concessionary fee arrangements to students from other Local Education Authority areas attending non-vocational courses in Camden'. Although Camden has broadly similar fee structures to other LEAs, the lack of reciprocal arrangements can only damage both Camden's provision in the long term and the range and ease of access to adult education in the city generally.

It is clear that where reciprocal arrangements do not exist many students will find it prohibitive to pay the out-borough fee which is double the standard rate. For example, where a borough is charging a standard AE fee of 60p per hour and there is no reciprocal arrangement with another borough, residents of that borough will have to pay an out-borough fee of £1.20 per hour. Not only is choice thereby limited but the provision itself will also suffer. For as Barbara MacGilchrist, ILEA's last Chief Inspector, noted, 'many courses in a college cannot continue unless they recruit across inner London'. **(Quoted in 'ILEA News', 6 November 1989).**

The New LEAs: Looking to the Future

Access to inner London's educational provision for adults has, in the short time since the abolition of ILEA, undergone profound changes. Not only has a unitary fee structure across inner London been dismantled, but there is every indication, confirmed by our survey, that uncertainties caused by devolution to the new LEAs will in the short term deny a chance of education and a range of choice to many who want and need it.

Our survey revealed that:

> **35% of Access and Return-to-Learning tutors felt that abolition of the ILEA would affect recruitment for 1990/91.**
> **25% of tutors felt that uncertainties regarding the new LEAs' position on fees would affect recruitment for 1990/91**

Indeed, there is already evidence of courses being closed due to problems in recruiting adequate numbers to make them viable and budget cuts brought about the introduction of the Community Charge. The new Tower Hamlets College, for example, has not been able to offer the range of provision it had planned - including many vocational courses. Although the reasons for this failure to recruit are not yet clear, it is possible that prohibitive fees or lack of access to awards may be factors contributing to an inability to recruit widely. Lambeth, which has been Community Charge 'capped', has had to close recreational courses in order to maintain its return-to-learning provision in the face of a cut in its education budget.

The longer term picture is harder to gauge, but it is probable that many more courses will disappear and, try as they might, the new local education authorities will be forced to make decisions that will not be in the interests of their residents nor of education and training provision in general.

DES ACCESS FUNDS

The 1988 White Paper, 'Top-up Loans for Students' announced the Government's intention to introduce loans for full-time students whilst simultaneously freezing the level of grants. Most full-time students would no longer be eligible to claim Housing Benefit, Income Support or Unemployment Benefit (there are exceptions for single parents, disabled students, students over retirement age and students who have a partner who is a student if they have dependent children). The reason given by the Secretary of State for this change in financial support arrangements for full-time students was to '...encourage greater economic awareness and self-reliance'. **(HC Deb, 9.11.88 c 308)**

The White Paper also stated that the Government planned to set up Access Funds to provide financial assistance to students aged 19 and over in order to increase access to further and higher education - in effect, a compensation for loss of benefits.

The Education (Student Loans) Act was subsequently passed in the 1989/90 parliamentary session, providing the necessary legislation relating to 'Top-up Loans' and Access Funds. During the passage of the legislation, concerns were expressed regarding the amount of money to be made available under the Access Funds scheme (£15 million nationally) and it was increased to £25 million.

Access Funds are available, as are loans, for the 1990/91 academic year. There are three separate funds available to students in the following groups:

* full-time home students aged 19 and over in further and adult education (£5m).
* full-time home students in higher education (£14m).
* full-time home postgraduate students (£6m).

The funds are allocated to educational institutions on the basis of the number of full-time students aged over 19 who were attending each institution in November 1989. DES guidance stipulates that they are to be used to provide financial assistance to students

> where access to further or higher education might be inhibited by financial considerations, or where students, for whatever reasons, including physical or other disabilities, face financial difficulties. **('Terms and Conditions For Payment of Access Funds to Further Education Institutions', DES, 1990)**

Access Funds are administered by Governing Bodies who must also decide the precise criteria for distributing them. A designated member of staff within each institution should be responsible for administering the scheme including assessing and advising students, making accountancy arrangements and monitoring take-up of the funds.The DES hopes that institutions 'will work out imaginative arrangements for enhancing the value and scope of the Access Funds'. These might include sponsorship or helping students to find paid employment. **('Guidance Notes For Further Education Governing Bodies Receiving Access Funds', DES, April 1990)**

Clearly, many adult students in further or adult education on full-time courses, such as Access courses, who are not eligible for a 'top-up loan' should, in theory, be in a position to take advantage of the Access Funds. However, the situation in practice is rather more complex and many concerns have been expressed in relation to disbursal of the funds.

1. The amount of money which individual institutions are eligible to receive from the funds is still neglible, despite the overall figure having been increased to £25m. This figure, as

the National Union of Students has pointed out, still compares very unfavourably with the £68m claimed by students in benefits last year - to which they are no longer entitled if eligible for a 'top-up loan' **('A labyrinth for those in need' The Guardian, 18/9/90).** Furthermore, since the funds are allocated on a discretionary basis there is no guarantee that they will be used to compensate for the loss of an *entitlement* to benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit.

2. There is a danger that if the funds are spread too thinly this could actually disadvantage students because payments from the funds can be taken into account when assessments are made for benefits such as Income Support or entitlements to awards. It is therefore important that careful consideration is given to the criteria upon which the funds are to be allocated.

3. Even if criteria for allocating the funds without affecting students' entitlement to awards or benefits can be established, there are difficulties in avoiding means-testing and ensuring an equitable distribution. DES guidelines stipulate that criteria 'should be flexible enough to enable a fair and just response to individual cases of need' **('Guidance Notes for Further Education Governing Bodies receiving Access Funds', DES, April 1990).** In practice, however, this is extremely difficult. In one case cited by an Access course tutor, the institution had decided that its Access Fund should give priority to childcare expenses. A single male student who was experiencing financial difficulties was not, therefore, able to receive any help from the Access Fund. When he approached the DSS, he was informed that he should apply to the Access Fund for help in paying his rent because 'that's what it is for'.

4. As the above case illustrates, local criteria drawn up by institutions for distributing Access Funds can lead to confusion and disparate patterns of allocation across the country. This is especially significant in view of the fact that payments from the fund can have a bearing both on entitlement to benefits (which is determined by national DSS regulations) and discretionary awards (which are allocated according to local education authority policies).

5. Mechanisms for accountability need to be established within institutions to ensure that both staff and students are aware of the existence of the Access Funds and are involved in decisions about how they are to be allocated. To this end, some institutions have set up working parties to decide criteria for disbursal.

With this latter point in mind, the Forum for Access Studies has drawn up a checklist for tutors and has suggested that networking and monitoring should take place nationally so that good practice can be disseminated. **(see 'Focus...on the DES Access Funds', FAST, June 1990)**

Taken together, the introduction of 'top-up loans' and Access Funds as well as accompanying changes in Social Security Regulations have added to the financial difficulties and complexities for full-time students. A particular area of concern is the removal of students on discretionary awards from Housing benefit. For such students are in many instances ineligible for a 'top-up loan' (if their course of study is below first degree level) and may not be able to claim from their local Access Fund for help with housing costs if the institution has decided to give priority to, for example, childcare costs. The financial difficulties which thereby arise can lead to a situation where a student is better off studying under the 21-Hour Rule and claiming Income Support (so long as the course does not exceed 21 hours per week) rather than being supported on a discretionary award

Indeed, as one Access course tutor pointed out, even single parents - who are still eligible to claim Housing Benefit whilst in receipt of a grant - are often financially better off claiming Income Support. The changes in financial support arrangements for full-time students seem, therefore, only to have added to their complexity whilst at the same time defeating the Government's intention that students should be removed from the Social Security system.

CONCLUSIONS

Educational provision for adults in London has a key role to play in the 1990s in enabling adults to acquire and up-date basic skills as well as to progress to further courses of education and training and gain much needed skills, qualifications and confidence. Yet financial support systems for adult students have become extremely precarious as well as increasingly complex. This, in itself, can act as a disincentive to learning as potential students try to disentangle the financial complexities before they can realistically contemplate embarking on a course of study. In addition, staff in educational institutions have the task of trying to circumnavigate these financial barriers to learning on a day-to-day basis, thus increasing their workload and the complexity of their role.

As our survey revealed, threats to financial support for adult students now come from many different directions.

1. Abolition of the ILEA
The decision to dismantle a unitary education authority for inner London was controversial. However, the arguments are not only political: our survey revealed that 35% of educational pratitioners - Access and Return-to-Learning tutors - were concerned about the effects of ILEA's abolition on recruitment and, by implication, on future provision for adults. There is a danger that failure to recruit widely across London due to prohibitive financial costs may lead to provision being eroded and educational oppportunities therefore being lost.

2. The New Inner London Local Education Authorities
The inner London boroughs to which responsibility for education has been devolved have, in the short period of time between the decision to dismantle the ILEA and its abolition, set up mechanisms to ensure continuity in terms both of ease of movement across London and unity of provision. However, uncertainties generated by the handover have been damaging. In addition, many boroughs are facing severe financial pressures due to the introduction of the Community Charge (and subsequent 'capping') at the same time as they assumed responsibility for education. It has already become apparent that harsh decisions are having to be made as education budgets come under increasing pressure. This increasingly harsh financial climate may well result in restricted access to discretionary awards and concessionary fees.

3. Study under the 21-Hour Rule
The provision whereby unemployed people are allowed to study part-time whilst in receipt of benefits has become increasingly restrictive. In addition, stricter procedures for interviewing and monitoring long-term unemployed people under the Restart scheme have made it more difficult for them to take advantage of the 21-Hour Rule and engage in part-time study.

These developments are short-sighted in that they fail to recognise the potential of educational opportunities in facilitating progression back into employment. Moreover, the measures which educational institutions are having to adopt to enable students subject to benefit regulations to continue to study are a wasteful distraction from the central goals and purposes of educational providers.

4. Employment Training
For many unemployed people who are unable to obtain a grant for a course of study and for whom study under the 21-Hour Rule is both financially prohibitive and subject to

intolerably strict benefit regulations, a place on an ET scheme may be the only option left in order to re-equip themseves for entry to the labour market. However, it is likely to be a poor substitute both in terms of the quality of training on offer and the lack of progression routes to further, higher level courses. The failure of national quality control mechanisms may be exacerbated by the devolution of responsibility for ET to local Training and Enterprise Councils.

5. Access Funds

This recently introduced means of providing financial assistance to adult students, which was clearly intended to compensate for loss of benefits with the introduction of student 'top-up' loans, adds to the complexity of the financial balancing act which many students face. It is difficult to establish criteria for distributing the funds equitably so that some categories of student are not unfairly disadvantaged. Moreover, students risk being disqualified from other sources of support such as state benefits and LEA awards unless careful consideration is given to the criteria for disbursal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the conclusions which can be drawn from our research, we are making the following recommendations.

1. Study under the 21-Hour Rule
Unemployed people who seek to take advantage of part-time study under the 21-Hour Rule as their preferred route back into employment should be seen as fulfilling 'actively seeking work' regulations. They should not therefore be required to provide further documentary proof of job-search activities.

2. Restart
Part-time study under the 21-Hour Rule should be a valid option under the Restart 'menu' and should therefore be regarded as a positive outcome of a Restart interview. If the Restart interview is to offer real alternatives in helping the long-term unemployed back into employment, Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers should formally be in a position to refer clients to educational advice and guidance agencies.

3. Employment Training
Courses offered under ET are likely to be of little value in re-training unemployed adults and equipping them with the skills which are much needed by the labour market unless they are more closely integrated with traditional forms of education/training provided by further, adult and higher education. Not only do such institutions have a wealth of expertise from which ET schemes could draw, but they also have well-established progression routes and links with educational advice and guidance agencies.

4. Training and Enterprise Councils
Given existing variability in the quality of ET schemes, quality control mechanisms need to be enhanced to ensure that, with the devolution of responsibility for ET to local TECs, the programme does not become yet more disparate in the quality of training on offer.

Moreover, with a view to fostering enhanced links between the ET programme and providers of education for adults, local TECs need to ensure that the views of educational providers are adequately represented on their boards. They should also endeavour to advance plans for more integrated forms of training which include those already in work as well as the unemployed.

5. Reciprocal Arrangements on Fees
Much work has already been done by the new inner London local education authorities to negotiate reciprocal arrangements on fees and a common fee structure to ensure that ease of movement across London continues. These negotiations must continue so that a unified fee structure and 'free trade' arrangements are achieved. This is imperative otherwise people may be denied access to education through prohibitive costs and educational provision may be lost due to a failure to recruit widely across borough boundaries.

6. Discretionary Awards

The new inner London LEAs have, in many instances, already made commitments to adult learning in their policies on allocating discretionary awards. These commitments must be maintained and strengthened so that student choice is not restricted to educational provision in the local borough.

7. Liaison with Benefit Authorities

In view of local variations in interpreting benefit regulations which can crucially determine unemployed people's ability to engage in part-time study, local boroughs should play a pro-active networking/liaison role between the Employment Service, local DSS offices and educational institutions so as to maximise the possibilities of unemployed people being able to study under the 21-Hour Rule.

8. Access Funds

Individual institutions should set up working parties involving adult tutors and students to decide criteria for disbursal of the funds. Networking and monitoring of good practice in deciding criteria need to be established locally and nationally as recommended by the Forum for Access Studies in an endeavour to reach some degree of uniformity on criteria for distribution.

SURVEY RESULTS

406 questionnaires were sent to course tutors of Access and Return-to-Learning courses (90 Access, 316 Return-to-Learning courses) within London's four Open College Networks - ALFA, CAWLOC, GLEAN and OCSL - in June 1990.

Response Rate

116 questionnaires were returned:
- 32 from Access course tutors
- 84 from RTL course tutors

This represents a total response rate of 28.5%, although the response rate was slightly higher amongst Access than RTL tutors.

Mode of Study

Of the total number of responses, courses break down as follows in terms of the modes of study offered:

- **12%** were full-time courses
- **47%** were part-time day courses
- **25%** were part-time evening courses
- **18%** were available in both full-time and part-time modes.

Aim of Course

- **15%** of courses were aimed at those wanting further education/training
- **14%** of courses were aimed at those wanting vocational training
- **12%** of courses were aimed at those wanting to go on to higher education
- **27%** of courses were aimed at those who are educationally disadvantaged
- **15%** of courses were aimed at people from ethnic minority groups
- **15%** of courses were aimed at unemployed people
- **10%** of courses were aimed at women returners

Progression Routes

Respondents reported the following progression routes for their courses:

- **50%** with progression to higher education
- **20%** with progression to Access courses
- **13%** with progression to professional and other forms of training
- **45%** with progression to other types of course
- **42%** with progression to employment/self-employment
- **2%** with no progression routes

Student Finance 1989/90

19% of courses contained students in receipt of discretionary awards
73% of courses contained students studying under the 21-Hour rule
59% of courses contained students engaged in part-time work
16% of courses contained students engaged in full-time work
7% of courses contained students supported by relatives
5% of courses contained studednts on one parent benefit

The most common means of finance were:

On **11%** of courses students were mainly financed by discretionary awards
On **44%** of courses students were mainly financed under the 21-Hour Rule (benefits)
On **8%** of courses students were mainly financed by a combination of part-time work and benefits
On **7%** of courses students were mainly financed by full-time work

Discretionary Awards 1990/91

Of those courses attracting discretionary awards during 1989/90

59% expected awards to continue under the new LEA
9% did not expect discretionary awards to continue under the new LEA
27% did not know whether discretionary awards would continue under the new LEA

Employment Training

20% of respondents reported that ET trainees had 'in-filled' onto their courses.
Of these, **26%** were 'in-fills' on Access courses.

Effects of DSS Regulations on Students Studying under the 21-Hour Rule

52% of respondents claimed that students on benefits had experienced difficulties as a result of DSS 'actively seeking work' regulations. The main categories were:

32% reported that the regulations had created anxiety amongst students
24% reported that students attendance had been adversely affected
6% reported students having difficulties with concentration
5% reported more students working part-time
5% reported students progress affected due to having to take up part-time work
5% reported students feeling that part-time study had been devalued
5% reported students abandoning their course
4% reported students experiencing financial hardship due to problems in receiving benefits
3% reported students switching to ET
2% reported students having less time for private study

Pressures from the Employment Service

35% of respondents claimed that students had been forced to abandon their course due to pressures from the Employment Service. Of these:

51% said that students had been forced to abandon their studies due to anxieties created by interviews with Restart Counsellors/Claimant Advisers
29% said students abandoned their course due to pressure to take up employment
19% said that students had been forced to abandon their course in order to take up a place on an ET scheme
15% said students abandoned their course because of threats to/loss of benefits

Strategies Adopted to Support Students Studying under the 21-Hour Rule

68% of respondents reported that their institutions had adopted specific strategies to support students on benefits studying under the 21-hour rule. Of these:

73% had established advice sessions for students on benefits
38% had set up job-search activities to help students satisfy 'actively seeking work' regulations
33% had adopted curriculum changes in order to make it easier for people on benefits to study
16% had adopted other measures such as financial support to enable students to continue to study

Recruitment Patterns 1990/91

Respondents were asked to indicate how they felt recruitment for their courses for 1990/91 would compare with that for 1989/90.
Responses were as follows (June/July 1990):

39% of respondents were unable at this stage to say how recruitment compared with 1989/90.
23% reported an increase in recruitment for 1990/91
14% felt that recruitment for 1990/91 would be comparable to that for 1989/90
13% reported a decrease in recruitment for 1990/91

Factors Affecting Recruitment for 1990/91

Respondents were asked to indicate which factors they felt were most likely to affect recruitment patterns for 1990/91. Responses were as follows:

42% felt that benefit regulations would affect recruitment for their course for 1990/91
35% felt that the effects of the abolition of ILEA would affect recruitment for 1990/91
25% felt that uncertainties regarding fees would affect recruitment for 1990/91
23% felt that uncertainties regarding discretionary awards would affect recruitment for 1990/91
21% felt that the Employment Training scheme would have an effect on recruitment for 1990/91
9% felt that the introduction of student loans would affect recruitment for their courses.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

GLEAN

Greenwich & Lewisham Education for Adults Network

Open College of South London

CAWLOC

alfa ACCESS TO LEARNING FOR ADULTS
The North & East London Open College Network

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: .....

INSTITUTION: .....

TEL: .....

BOROUGH: .....

ABOUT THE COURSE

1. What is your course called? .....

2. Is it: ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-time ☐ Part-time Evening ☐ Offered FT & PT

3. How many hours attendance is required on the course every week? .....

4. How long does the course last? .....

5. Who is the course aimed at? .....

.....

6. How many students did you have on the course this year? .....

7. What does the course lead on to? .....

.....

.....

STUDENT FUNDING PROJECT

Room 306, The Marlborough Building, 383 Holloway Road,
London N7 ORN, Tel: 071 607 9393

RECRUITMENT

8. How does your experience of recruitment, so far, for 1990/91 compare with that of 1989/90?

☐ No Change ☐ Decrease ☐ Increase ☐ Can't tell at present

9. Are there changes in the profiles/types of students coming forward? (eg. age group/gender/ethnic background etc). Please say what these are.

.....

.....

10. Has there been a change in the number of prospective students for 1990/91 who come from your local borough compared with 1989/90? (Please give approximate numbers)

☐ No Change ☐ Decrease ☐ Increase ☐ Can't tell at present

STUDENT FINANCE

11. (i) How did students finance their course of study during 1989/90?

☐ Discretionary awards ☐ 21 hours (benefits) ☐ P/T work ☐ F/T work ☐ Other (please specify)

Please give approximate numbers.

....

(ii) What was the most common form of student finance?

(iii) If the course attracted discretionary awards under ILEA, will it continue to do so under your new LEA?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

12. If students pay their own fees:

A. What <u>was</u> i) the standard fee for ILEA residents?
.....

ii) the concessionary fee for ILEA residents?
.....

B. What <u>will be</u> i) the standard fee for borough residents in 1990/91? .....

ii) the concessionary fee for borough residents in 1990/91 .....

C. How much will students from other boroughs have to pay at:

i) the standard rate? .....

ii) the concessionary rate? (if any) .....

13. Do you have any ET trainees who have 'in-filled' onto your course? If so, how many throughout the present academic year? .....

STRATEGIES AND IMPACT OF FUNDING ISSUES

14. What effects have 'Actively Seeking Work' regulations (1989 Social Security Act) had on:

a) Your students' personal/financial situation?

b) Your students' ability to study?

15. Have students dropped out of the course due to pressures from the Employment Service/DSS?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many? .....

What were the reasons?

16. What strategies has your institution adopted to support students on benefits?

☐ None ☐ Advice sessions ☐ Job-search facilities offer ☐ Changes in curriculum ☐ Other (please specify)

17. i) What sorts of queries/problems do students on benefits have?

ii) Do you feel able to answer them?

18. What do you think is having the greatest effect on recruitment for 1990/91 at the moment?

☐ benefit regulations

☐ uncertainties about fees

☐ uncertainties about discretionary awards policies

☐ student loans

☐ ET

☐ uncertainties due to ILEA abolition

☐ other (please specify)

19. Has your institution devised a strategy to monitor/support adult access/return to learning provision? (eg. Curriculum review/Outreach/Marketing)

☐ Yes. Please explain briefly what this is.

☐ No

20. How do you think learning opportunities for adults in London could be improved?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

IF YOU WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS, PLEASE TICK HERE ☐